

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBUL #2851/01 3001212
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 261212Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5959
INFO RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 002851

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS USAID FOR ASIA/SCAA
NSC FOR WOOD
OSD FOR WILKES
CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A, CG CJTF-101 POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/26/2013

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: NURISTAN:INSECURITY IN NEIGHBORING DISTRICT
THREATENS BARGI MATAL,S TIES TO THE PROVINCE

Classified By: PRT Director Valerie Fowler for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Bargi Matal,s district administrator, Mohammed Ishmael, and local leaders described security in their district as stable, and identified security in neighboring Kamdish district as their principal concern. The chief request from Ishmael and Bargi Matal elders was for the PRT to construct a road to Pakistan given that travel through Kamdish into the rest of Afghanistan remains blocked for security reasons. An October 13 meeting of the provincial Chief of Police and Provincial Council President with district elders exposed the district,s deep divisions about local governance and the way forward. END SUMMARY

ROADS AND SECURITY LINKED

12. (C) Security in Kamdish district was identified by provincial and district leaders as the district,s primary concern, as insecurity prevents the movement of supplies and people to and from Bargi Matal on the only vehicle-capable road leading into the district. Border security, infrastructure development, medical care, education and communications are suffering as a result of the road,s closure.

13. (C) As an alternative to the insecure road leading from Kunar through Kamdish and into Bargi Matal, the district administrator and elders requested that the PRT build a road (where a donkey trail currently exists) that would lead into Pakistan,s Chitral city in the Northwest Frontier Province. Ishmael reported that Pakistani authorities have agreed to construct the Pakistan side of the road up to the border. PRT Nuristan agreed to consider the request but noted that there are substantial obstacles to overcome, particularly the transport of building supplies and quality assurance/control.

SECURITY IN KAMDISH AND BARGI MATAL

14. (C) A great deal of debate erupted among meeting participants about how to address security in Kamdish. Local elders pointedly criticized the district administrator for failing to engage his counterpart in Kamdish. Ishmael did not dismiss this eventual possibility. Some in the group called for "shura to shura" contacts, however others stressed

that Kamdish elders are not interested in improving security.

Despite ample discussion there was no agreed course of action while PRT officials were present.

15. (C) District Administrator Ishmael stated that security in Bargi Matal remains stable. The threat from the Taliban has subsided since an attack several months ago which led the district's citizens to take up arms and successfully defend the area. Some elders confirmed reports that Anti-Afghan Forces (AAF) continue to traverse the district, while the Afghan Border Police (ABP) chief insisted that such movement has halted. Provincial Chief of Police Kaseem and Provincial Council President Rashidi suggested that Bargi Matal convene a "Security Shura" that could work with ANP and ABP to better monitor security developments. Both leaders praised the citizens of Bargi Matal for their loyalty to the central government.

ISHMAEL, S SHURA

16. (C) Village elders complained loudly about Ishmael's advisory "shura," calling it an illegitimate body. The elders are upset that the local government is not allowing the villages to elect their own representatives to the district shura; instead, they assert that the district administrator is choosing those loyal to him, which goes against Nuristani culture. Ishmael defended the shura, insisting that members are elected representatives from various villages. A heated debate ensued, with the district administrator eventually calling an end to discussion and requesting that further talks take place without PRT

officials present.

17. (C) It is clear that the provincial government needs a stronger presence in Bargi Matal district. Ishmael enjoys some support but discontent among the village elders over the shura selection could damage his longer-term effectiveness. Unless security in Kamdish improves, Bargi Matal district is likely to become increasingly isolated from Nuristan and further disconnected from the central government. Bargi Matal has a reputation for being Nuristan's most educated region, with a strong economy fueled by its proximity to Pakistan. Bringing the district closer to Nuristan would benefit the province. Without stronger security on the Kamdish road, Bargi Matal will seek stronger ties with Pakistan -- ties that could be detrimental to Afghanistan's security if citizens allow the area to become a chief transit point for AAF.

WOOD